



SPRINGFIELD, IL – State Senator Tony Munoz (D-Chicago) voted this week with his colleagues to re-authorize spending for the State's capital construction plan, cut lawmakers' pay by nearly five percent, as well as passed an election reform bill that will ensure our troops overseas have the opportunity to vote.

"Stopping the summer construction season would have cost people their jobs, hurt our economy, and ended repairs and upgrades to our roads, bridges, and schools," stated Senator Munoz, a member of the Senate Executive Committee.

To save more taxpayer dollars, the General Assembly also voted to cancel their scheduled cost of living adjustment, freeze per diem travel reimbursements at a lower rate, and take 12 furlough days. Legislators have done the same thing for the past two years.

"While making these cuts to almost all agencies and programs in Illinois, we could not exempt ourselves, therefore we voted to reduce our pay and our benefits through furlough days and lower per diem's," stated Senator Munoz. "Although cutting back was not easy, we have passed a responsible and balanced budget."

Other issues that were dealt with this week include an election reform bill that will require local election authorities to make sure they have enough ballots for overseas members of the military and will require candidates to be more responsible when collecting signatures to get on the ballot. In addition, the Senate passed a measure that will make it easier for the State to capture extra Medicaid funding from the federal government.

Because the legislators returned on their own and not in response to a call from the governor, legislators did not receive per diem payments to pay for travel and lodging.